

May 8, 2002

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members

FROM: Vickie Ybarra, RN, MPH  
Charles Chu, DPM  
The Honorable Margaret Pageler, JD

RE: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING WORK PLAN

**Background and Summary**

The Children's Health and Well-Being Work Plan, approved by the Board of Health in October 2001, specifies that the Committee come before the Board this spring and recommend a course of action to help prevent or reduce overweight and obesity in children. The approved work plan identified improved nutrition and increased physical activity as specific approaches to be examined.

The Committee has completed an assessment of possible Board activities to meet this charge, and it is recommending three courses of action it believes would be distinct and effective—

1. Build the relationship between the Washington State Board of Health and the Washington State Board of Education to coordinate responsibilities related to school health issues.
2. Explore opportunities to develop public-private partnerships to encourage health education, physical activity, and nutrition for school-age children. Consider engaging with existing organizations that have mutual concerns as well as with other possible collaborators.
3. Evaluate the various funding streams and financial incentives that affect nutrition, health education, and physical activity in schools.

The Committee has prepared a set of proposed revisions to the adopted plan that incorporate these courses of action and that reflect the current state of rule making activities. The revised work plan is attached. The Committee is asking the Board to adopt the work plan as revised.

**Proposed Board Action**

The Children's Health and Well-Being Committee makes the following motion:

**The Washington State Board of Health approves and adopts the Revised Summary of Planned Work, Children's Health and Well Being, Phase II (2001-03) as submitted May 8, 2002.**

## **Discussion**

Consistent with the Board's general approach to establishing priority work, the Children's Health and Well-Being Committee sought to identify opportunities to add value to existing efforts, or to fill gaps in work underway. The Committee also considered the availability of existing Board resources and consistency with current Board authority.

The Committee assessed existing data; specific programs and activities planned or underway; efforts in other states; and agencies, organizations and coalitions focused on nutrition, health education, and physical activity.

The assessment revealed that overweight and obesity is an increasing problem for children as well as adults. Overweight and obesity is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, and other chronic diseases. The assessment also supported the belief that changes in nutrition, health education, and physical activity influence the onset and seriousness of health problems children may have during childhood and throughout their lives.

The assessment also demonstrated that activities are currently underway that attempt to accomplish the same goals that the Board wants to accomplish. One of these activities is the Department of Health grant *State Nutrition and Physical Activity Programs to Prevent Obesity and Related Chronic Diseases*, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The five-year grant calls for a statewide assessment of the current obesity problem in adolescents, development of a state plan for addressing the problem, and implementation of a pilot project to evaluate the state plan in at least one county. The effort includes the formation of an advisory committee of experts and stakeholders from the public sector, non-profits, and organizations that might have an impact on overweight and obesity in children.

The Children's Health and Well-Being Committee's assessment also examined the role and authority of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) regarding nutrition, physical activity, and health education. Federal programs that encourage nutrition were also examined.

Based on this assessment, the Children's Health and Well-Being Committee would like to explore three courses of action for the Board that would be likely to help prevent and reduce overweight and obesity in children:

1. Build the relationship between the Washington State Board of Health and the Washington State Board of Education to coordinate responsibilities related to school health issues.
2. Explore opportunities to develop public-private partnerships to encourage health education, physical activity, and nutrition for school-age children. Consider engaging with existing organizations that have mutual concerns as well as with other possible collaborators.
3. Evaluate the various funding streams and financial incentives that affect nutrition, health education, and physical activity in schools.

The Committee developed a revised work plan that reflects these activities. Also, the Committee has continued to work on several Board rules under review since the Board approved the Children's Health and Well-Being Work Plan in October 2001. Additional revisions to the proposed work plan reflect the current status of those efforts.